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Jamaica: Drug Industry in Transition

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An Intelligence Assessment

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*GI 85-10268
November 1985*

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Jamaica: Drug Industry in Transition

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
Office of Global Issues. It was coordinated with the
Directorate of Operations. [redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Terrorism/Narcotics Analysis
Division [redacted]

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*GI 85-10268
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**Jamaica:
Drug Industry in
Transition**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 30 September 1985
was used in this report.*

Responding to a rapidly expanding North American market, Jamaican marijuana production has evolved from a cottage industry to a large-scale, consolidated criminal enterprise. Jamaicans also are moving beyond their customary role as marijuana cultivators into international trafficking, and several of the island's leading drug traders have developed distribution networks in the US retail market. Further, some Jamaican drug traffickers have taken advantage of the skills and connections acquired in marijuana smuggling to diversify into the more lucrative traffic in cocaine.

The changing nature of Jamaica's drug industry will make it more difficult to suppress. These changes have created a class of criminals with better organization and greater resources than Jamaican security forces have ever faced. This new and more dangerous group of criminal entrepreneurs threatens to derail drug control efforts chiefly through their power to corrupt law enforcement and judicial administration. We conclude that corruption now reaches the highest levels of the Seaga government and that through payoffs and political contributions the traffickers are gaining more influence over Jamaica's political process.

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Paralleling the growing drug industry are rising levels of drug abuse and domestic violence. Jamaican drug traders have been importing illegal weapons to protect their greater economic stake in drug operations. Jamaica's growth as a transit area for cocaine from South America has stimulated the development of a cocaine market on the island, leading to increased cocaine abuse among Jamaicans. Concerned about the increasing drug abuse and violence that has accompanied rising cocaine trafficking, many Jamaicans are changing their formerly tolerant attitude toward drug trafficking.

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The Government of Jamaica has taken positive steps since late 1984 to improve the island's drug enforcement, increasing the pace of marijuana eradication and tightening control of Jamaica's many airfields. Prime Minister Seaga had previously been reluctant to enforce Jamaican drug laws aggressively, despite steady US pressure. Although his new approach may be an attempt to mollify US officials critical of Jamaican performance in drug control, in our opinion it is more likely a response to a perceptible shift in public attitudes and a growing realization that drug production and trafficking in Jamaica have changed from a small-scale operation to a well-organized business.

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Improved counternarcotics measures, particularly manual eradication of marijuana, have forced growers and traffickers to adjust and made them vulnerable, but these measures also have taxed Jamaica's limited resources. To sustain its program, Jamaica will need additional outside assistance—not only funds but also equipment and training for its security forces. Prosecutors also need additional legal power, such as asset seizure laws, and the government needs to reinforce growing public opinion in favor of continued strong enforcement.

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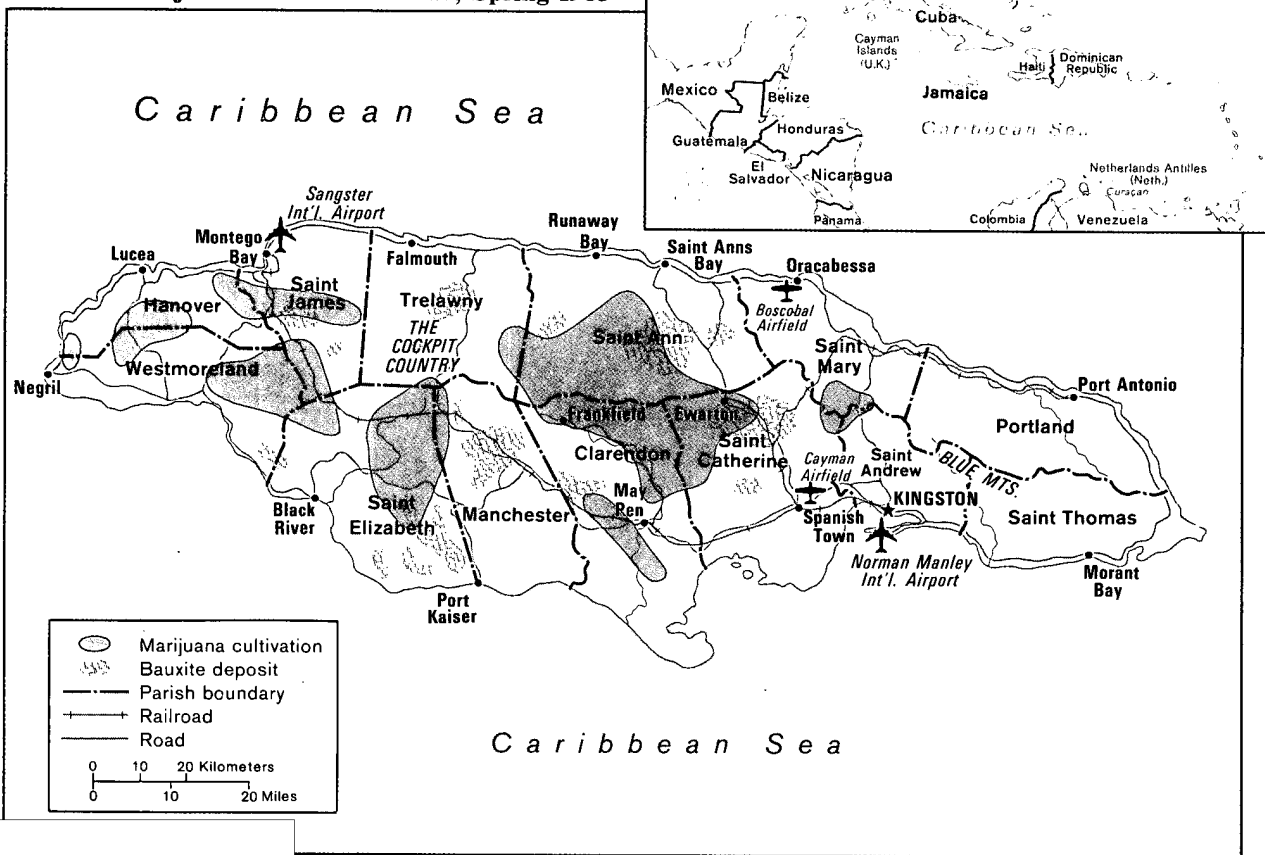
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Jamaica: Marijuana Cultivation Areas, Spring 1985



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Jamaica: Drug Industry in Transition

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Introduction

Increasingly effective drug suppression programs in Jamaica since late 1984 have forced narcotics traffickers to reduce their operations and provoked defensive responses. Jamaican security forces have destroyed more marijuana in the first five months of 1985 than in all of 1984, and total marijuana production for 1985 will probably fall below the 2,000 to 3,000 metric tons estimated for 1984. The Jamaican Government also has moved against the island's many unregistered airstrips used by traffickers both for shipping local marijuana and for transshipping Colombian cocaine to the United States.

The government's willingness to act after years of relative disinterest reflects a growing appreciation that the nature of the local narcotics industry is changing in ways that have serious implications for public security. At the same time, the changes in Jamaica's drug industry will make it easier for the major traffickers who now control it to weather the immediate impact of the government's counternarcotics campaign. These large-scale traffickers evidently expect that the government will be unable to sustain the present high level of activity and believe that time favors their side.

The Evolution of Marijuana Cultivation in Jamaica

The growth and profitability of the North American market lie behind the transformation of Jamaican marijuana cultivation. According to the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), as recently as the mid-1970s, Jamaican farmers produced only a few hundred metric tons of marijuana per year, enough to satisfy domestic consumption and tourists visiting the island. Jamaican marijuana cultivation was dominated by independent subsistence farmers, with the largest among them producing no more than a few hundred plants. When the success of Mexico's eradication program created an opening in the US and Canadian marijuana markets in the late 1970s, these small-scale Jamaican producers, who lacked access to capital and distribution channels, were unable to expand their production. Instead, a relatively few large-scale professional growers, who were able to

expand production quickly, seized the opportunity to meet the new market demand. As a result of the productivity of these professional growers and the rapid boost in output from their fields, Jamaica was producing an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 metric tons of marijuana per year by late 1984. Many of the small-scale producers still exist, but they are limited chiefly to supplying the domestic market.

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We conclude that large producers have been able to dominate the export market because they offer substantial advantages to buyers. Successful marijuana export requires efficiency in the production and marketing of the crop and security all along the trafficking chain. Large-scale growers provide safety, speed, and reliability in delivery to buyers, who prefer contact with a few trusted sources to contact with several dozen small, widely dispersed, and often unknown farmers. Moreover, professional producers often work on contract for major traffickers or brokers who supply them directly with capital in advance of a harvest; such financial backers have little interest in small-scale growers.

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Professional marijuana farmers are proving to be highly proficient managers, and they are using their access to capital and political connections to develop large-scale marijuana cultivation. Using modern agricultural techniques and spreading his crops over numerous fields, a successful big-time marijuana farmer can produce some nine to 10 metric tons of cured commercial grade marijuana during the two growing seasons each year, compared with the 100 or so kilograms typically produced by a small farmer:

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- [redacted] major growers employ several production foremen called gangmen, each of whom supervises a half dozen or so field workers. Sizable work details move from one field to another during planting, leaving behind a small group of maintenance workers to irrigate, fertilize, and prune the growing marijuana. When the crop matures, the resident field hands are rejoined by the larger work groups, and the gangmen supervise the harvest.

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Marijuana in Jamaica

Known in Jamaica by its Hindi name ganja, marijuana is firmly established in Jamaican culture. Marijuana was introduced to the island in the 19th century, probably by indentured laborers from India. Although the drug has been illegal in Jamaica since 1913, Jamaicans are generally tolerant of its use, and about half the working-class population smoke marijuana regularly while many others use it in some other form. The use of marijuana is a ritual among the Rastafarians, a minority religious cult native to Jamaica.

Marijuana is grown all over Jamaica, but, according to an aerial survey conducted at the peak of Jamaican cultivation in summer 1984, growing areas are concentrated mostly on government-owned land in the north-central and western parts of the island. Marijuana farmers use the mountainous areas of the interior as well as low-lying wetlands. Fields in the mountains are usually small, generally around two-tenths of a hectare. The rugged terrain of Jamaica's highlands precludes the use of mechanized agricultural equipment, and marijuana fields in these areas are often inaccessible except by mule or on foot. Growers in the lower areas or in the marshlands normally cultivate larger plots, sometimes up to two hectares or more, and can use small tractors or other modern equipment. These areas were the hardest hit during the eradication campaign in the first half of 1985.

Jamaica's weather permits year-round cultivation of marijuana, but planting is concentrated in two growing seasons each year. The larger of these is the summer crop, planted in April or May for harvest in the late summer or early fall. The winter crop is planted in the fall and harvested in January through March. Farmers are not bound by rigid schedules, however, and, according to US Drug Enforcement Administration officials in Kingston, marijuana is always in some stage of cultivation in Jamaica.

Most of the marijuana cultivated in Jamaica is standard or commercial-grade marijuana, grown for both domestic consumption and for export. To grow their crops, Jamaican farmers first plant seeds in

small peat pots and nurture the seedlings for about a month in primitive greenhouses or nurseries. When the seedlings are hardy enough, farmers transplant them to fields. Marijuana reaches its peak maturity within four to six months after germination, depending on soil conditions, rainfall, and other environment variables. Potency is highest at peak maturity, and farmers try to time their planting so that harvesting is stretched out over six weeks or more. After transplanting, commercial-grade marijuana must be irrigated and protected against pests.

about 5 percent of the commercial-grade crop is lost by natural causes before it can be harvested.

Jamaican growers also produce sinsemilla (meaning without seeds), a type of marijuana made from female plants whose flowers have not been pollinated. Sinsemilla commands far higher prices than commercial-grade marijuana because many users believe it is much more potent. Sinsemilla cultivation occurs mostly in the western parts of Jamaica,

Although sinsemilla is produced throughout the year, it is reported to grow best during the reduced daylight hours of the winter season. This form of marijuana comes from the same seed stock as commercial grade, but shortly after germination, all the male plants are destroyed. Farmers then transplant the female seedlings, keeping them away from commercial-grade plants to avoid accidental fertilization. Growers watch the female plants carefully over the next three or four months to assure that no male plants have survived.

A third marijuana product from Jamaica is called "hash oil," a dark, viscous fluid made by percolating hexane, ether, or acetone through marijuana. Hash oil is often made from waste material, such as stems, leaves, or decayed marijuana.

hash oil production rises whenever transportation channels are disrupted because growers prefer to sell to hash oil producers (or make hash oil themselves) rather than let their harvested marijuana rot. Jamaica is the only major producer of hash oil in the Western Hemisphere. According to the DEA, most of the island's hash oil is smuggled to Canada.

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*The marijuana plant—known
in Jamaica as "ganja."*

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Brokering. As the Jamaican export industry grew, local marijuana dealers first took over the brokering function, chiefly because they could develop better connections with the Jamaican growers than could North American buyers operating alone. Jamaican brokers or their agents now buy loose marijuana from farmers and do their own packaging and loading; [redacted]

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[redacted] We estimate

that in late 1984 there were between 20,000 and 25,000 farmers and field workers involved in the island's marijuana industry. Many of these workers used to be independent, small-scale marijuana growers who now serve as agricultural laborers for the big producers. Other workers specialize in packaging marijuana for shipment, in concealing it in commercial goods, in carrying it to clandestine airstrips, and in loading the boats and airplanes in which the illicit cargoes are smuggled. [redacted]

[redacted] many of these rural poor have no alternate source of income. [redacted]

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Concealment. Concealing loads of smuggled marijuana is a trafficking function at which Jamaicans excel, and the major organizations are rapidly developing a reputation for skill and innovation that rivals that of the sophisticated Colombian smuggling groups:

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Drug Trafficking:

A Changing Jamaican Role

Jamaican drug dealers also are transforming the nature of trafficking on the island. American and Canadian buyers created the export market by purchasing marijuana directly from Jamaican farmers or retailers, and by maintaining exclusive control of distribution from the island to the point of sale in North America. Because the biggest profits in the drug trafficking industry are in distribution, Jamaicans had strong incentives to move into trafficking. They are now taking over specialized functions such as brokering, concealment, and transportation. Some are expanding into retail distribution by developing networks in US cities, and others are diversifying into the even more profitable transshipment of cocaine from Colombia to the United States. [redacted]

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Assembling and Packaging Bulk Loads

The old model of marijuana production in Jamaica has not been completely displaced by the "corporate" model, and even major Jamaican traffickers still count on obtaining some of their export shipments from small independent farmers. [redacted]

In the traditional, small-scale production model, Jamaican marijuana buyers circulate in the main cultivation regions before the harvest, contacting farmers to negotiate the amounts of marijuana that each can supply. The buyers also specify the time and place for collecting the drugs but normally do not guarantee a price or even a sale. Before the agreed date of delivery, buyers or their agents often contact local police to arrange for protection during the inspection and sale of the crops. [redacted]

When the marijuana is ready for harvest, field hands cut and dry it, usually by hanging the approximately six-foot-high plants on poles or by laying them out on plastic sheets. Farmers then carry their cured marijuana down from remote hillsides by mule or on foot. The buyers return to the pickup point, usually at night, and meet with groups of growers. Buyers examine the marijuana for color, freshness, and resin content, frequently dickering with each farmer over the price. A buying session can last all night, and often involves many individual farmers, each of whom sells a small amount rarely exceeding 100 kilograms and often much less. [redacted]

[redacted] farmers receive between \$2.50 and \$11.00 per kilogram for commercial-grade marijuana, depending on the conditions of the market and the quality of their harvest. Sinsemilla prices are much higher, up to \$45 per kilogram. Buyers from the United States and Canada also take part in this process but usually pay higher prices than Jamaican buyers. [redacted]

Marijuana buyers truck their bulk loads to warehouses for packaging. If the local police have not been paid, buyers' assistants often scout ahead on the route to the warehouse, where packaging specialists prepare the load for delivery. [redacted]

[redacted] a major packaging specialist uses several pressing machines and may handle up to 3,000 kilograms of marijuana per week during the height of a good harvest. Packers compress the dried marijuana into rectangular blocks weighing about 15 kilograms each. Sinsemilla is not compressed because it is too delicate. [redacted]

Methods of packaging vary according to the intended mode of delivery. Packers usually tape the blocks of marijuana carefully in waterproof plastic for an airdrop, the most common delivery technique. They may also use brightly colored vinyl bags or bright fluorescent markers to make the bales of marijuana easier to spot after they are dropped in the water from smuggling aircraft. [redacted]

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Customs Service, but an increasing number of them are Jamaican. Many of the major Jamaican traffickers now own their aircraft, hire their own pilots, and are no longer dependent on US traffickers to finance this critical stage in the smuggling pipeline:

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Transportation. Most of the pilots who fly marijuana out of Jamaica are US citizens, according to the US

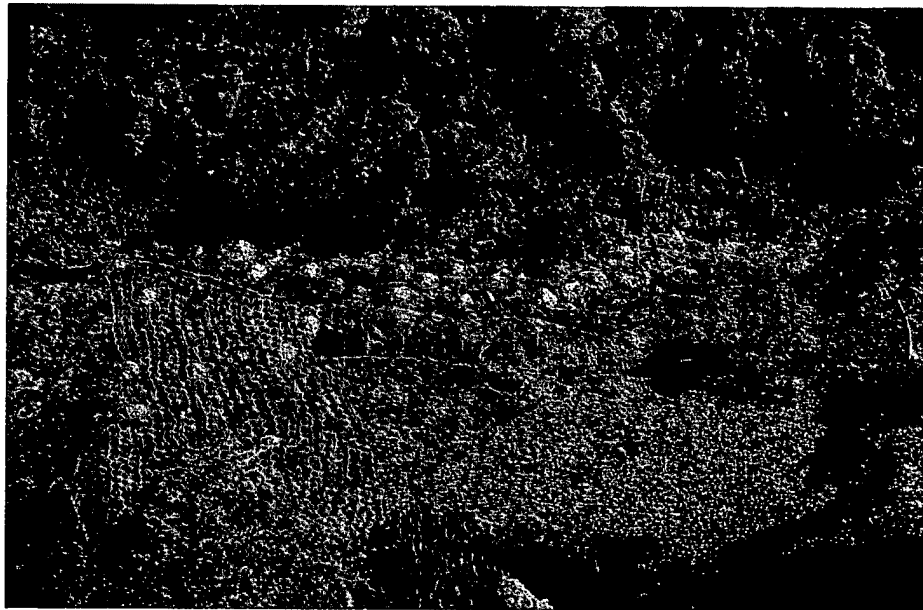
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The low-lying marshlands of western Jamaica offer ideal conditions for the cultivation of marijuana. The crop is normally germinated in seedbeds like this one before being transplanted to fields, where it matures in about 20 weeks.



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Before the transition to large-scale marijuana cultivation, Jamaica's drug industry was dominated by small, subsistence farmers who grew their marijuana in the same fields with legitimate crops, such as yams or beans. The marijuana in this photo is in the center and at the bottom.

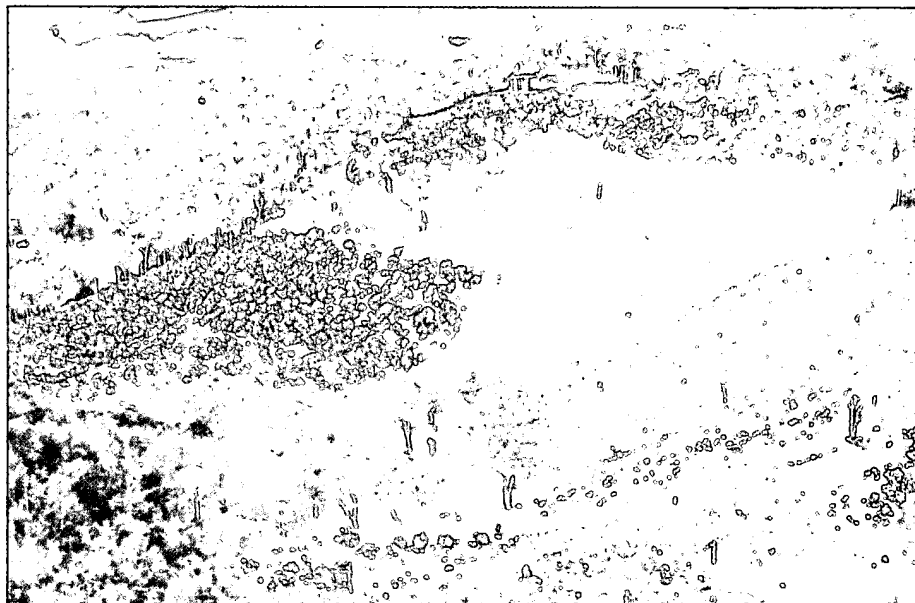


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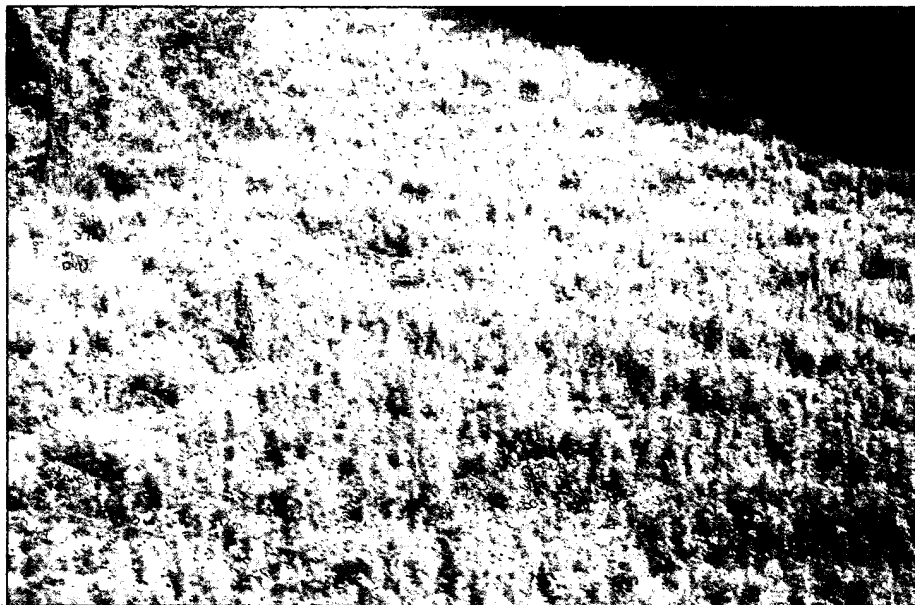
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Marijuana is in varying stages of growth in this large, approximately 2-hectare field in the central highlands of Jamaica. This field is about 10 times the size of a typical small-scale operation.



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This densely planted marijuana is about four to six weeks from maturity.



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Growing Participation in Cocaine Trafficking. We believe Jamaicans are becoming increasingly involved in the lucrative cocaine trade. Until recently, the cocaine found in Jamaica was usually small amounts used by tourists. Over the past two years, the island has become an important transit area for cocaine being shipped from Colombia to the United States. To satisfy an expanding US market for cocaine, Colombian suppliers needed to ship larger loads than could be handled by couriers on commercial flights, so they turned to boats and general aviation aircraft. Smugglers needed a place to refuel and resupply, and Jamaica was ideally located. Seizures of cocaine by Jamaican security forces totaled about 370 kilograms in 1984, the first year in which bulk seizures were recorded in Jamaica. The 1984 total was equaled in the first seven months of 1985. According to a DEA estimate, about 2,700 kilograms of cocaine passed through Jamaica between August 1984 and August 1985. Some was undoubtedly siphoned off for the Jamaican market, but we conclude most was bound for the United States.

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Retail Distribution. Jamaican drug traffickers now are seeking control of street-level distribution in the United States, and evidence indicates that major Jamaican narcotics organizations are moving toward that goal. [redacted] alleged that major Jamaican drug traffickers maintain regular and extensive contacts in the United States, especially in Florida. Between January and August 1984, the US Government revoked the visas of at least 29 known or suspected Jamaican drug traffickers. The narcotics traders responded by hiring US and Jamaican citizens with no criminal records to travel between the two countries carrying drugs, money, and information.

Some Jamaican drug dealers have been attracted by the higher profits and ease of handling of cocaine, and they have taken advantage of skills and connections acquired in marijuana smuggling to develop their own cocaine networks. [redacted]

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Jamaica's role as a transshipment point for cocaine is likely to expand, and as it does cocaine abuse by Jamaicans will almost certainly increase. Some cocaine is already skimmed to supply tourists and a

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growing number of domestic users, and there are signs of greater public concern and support for efforts to combat drug use. Numerous health professionals have expressed alarm at the noticeable increase in cocaine abuse, and the relationship between robbery and cocaine addiction has not gone unnoticed in Jamaican society. Under largely voluntary leadership, Jamaicans from the fields of health, public education, and law enforcement have periodically held community meetings and "workshops" to increase public awareness of drug abuse. Jamaica's National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA), appointed by Prime Minister Seaga in October 1983, now meets quarterly. [REDACTED]

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The New Narcotics Threat

As Jamaica's major drug traders have expanded beyond cultivating marijuana for the local market, they have become more wealthy, more powerful, and more dangerous. Consolidation of export production of marijuana, expansion by Jamaican drug dealers into retail distribution, and a growing Jamaican involvement in the lucrative cocaine trade have concentrated wealth in the hands of major traffickers on a scale unknown in Jamaican experience. These changes have created a class of criminals with better organization and greater resources than Jamaican security forces have ever faced. [REDACTED]

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Jamaica's leading traffickers threaten to derail official Jamaican drug control efforts chiefly through their power to corrupt law enforcement and judicial administration. Drug-related corruption, long a problem among the island's low-ranking rural constables, is penetrating the highest levels of the Seaga government. It is not too late to reverse these trends, but unless the Seaga government can sustain efforts to counter narcotics smuggling, the influence of major traffickers could spread and damage US and Jamaican efforts to suppress their trade. [REDACTED]

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Moving Marijuana to the US Market

Most of the marijuana smuggled from Jamaica to the United States leaves the island in small general aviation aircraft and is dropped over Bahamian waters to boats waiting to take it into south Florida. Many of the smuggling pilots are Americans, but Jamaicans are increasingly taking over this function, according to the US Customs Service. Pressure from both Jamaican and US authorities on smugglers using small aircraft is likely to lead to greater use of commercial air cargo and maritime routes. [redacted]

Air Routes and Methods. The "airdrop" method is the dominant air smuggling technique from Jamaica to the United States. It begins when an aircraft leaves a registered Jamaican airfield on a short flight to a clandestine strip near the warehouse, where the drugs have been processed. A Jamaican loading crew meets the pilot, who leaves his engine running for the three or four minutes required to get the bales of marijuana aboard his Piper-Aztec or Cessna airplane. Taking off with a load of 500 to 1,000 kilograms, the pilot heads north, crossing over Cuba. Using prearranged signals over the rendezvous point in Bahamian waters, the pilot picks out the vessel waiting below for the marijuana, and his companion—called a kicker—pushes the bales out of the airplane. His mission completed, either the pilot flies to The Bahamas to refuel or returns to Jamaica, if he has enough fuel to do so. [redacted]

Maritime Routes and Methods. According to the DEA, the US Coast Guard, the US Customs Service, [redacted] enforcement pressure on air smuggling also has caused greater use of maritime routes from Jamaica to the United States. Shipments of marijuana by sea have been concealed in commercial goods, in sealed compartments aboard many types of vessels, and in large commercial shipping containers. [redacted]

The use of ocean routes allows smugglers to ship larger loads of marijuana than can be moved by aircraft. This technique may also increase their risk; however, a single seizure results in a larger loss than if the shipment were dispersed. For example, major Jamaican trafficker Trevor Dunkley lost a 20-ton containerized shipment of marijuana in Kingston Harbor on 29 October 1984, and another five-ton load in a joint JDF/JCF operation in Montego Bay in early January 1985. [redacted]

The Cuban Role. [redacted]

[redacted] the Cuban role in marijuana smuggling is changing and that the Cubans now permit Jamaican pilots to pass over Cuba unhampered. During late 1983 and early 1984, most smuggling pilots leaving Jamaica chose to fly around the eastern end of Cuba rather than risk detection by Cuban authorities. By early 1985, [redacted] a steady stream of Jamaican smuggling flights over Cuba had become routine and that Cuban authorities were aware of the cargoes but did nothing to stop them. Although it is not possible to prove Cuban awareness, we believe that Cubans are in fact passively cooperating with marijuana smugglers. Since the destination of the drugs is the United States and not Cuba, Cuban authorities probably have little incentive to expend resources to halt the traffic. [redacted]

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Increase in Drug-Related Violence. The shift in Jamaican drug production and trafficking from a cottage industry to a sophisticated criminal enterprise is stimulating higher levels of domestic violence. As Jamaican drug smugglers have extended their reach to the United States, they have developed greater access to illegal arms, many of which enter Jamaica from Miami. With their growing wealth, Jamaican drug traders are better able to purchase weapons and to hire professional gunmen than ever before, and their greater economic stake in drug operations provides a strong incentive to use weapons and gunmen.

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Drug trafficking often brings with it increased violence because the potential economic returns are so high, and drug dealers everywhere arm themselves and hire armed men for protection against rival dealers. Fights over segments of a market are often bloody, and the firepower used by rival trafficking groups in Jamaica has been spiraling upward since last year. According to an officer of the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms

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drug traffickers in Jamaica now are armed with AR-15s and MAC-10s, both convertible to fully automatic fire. Jamaican security forces also have seized US M-16 military rifles from narcotics traffickers. The evidence is growing that Jamaican drug smugglers are now using established trafficking routes and methods to import illegal arms and ammunition:

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Four Jamaicans cutting down marijuana plants with brush cutters. Three of the men are uniformed JCF officers, the other is a laborer. Using equipment supplied by the US Government, Jamaican security forces stepped up marijuana eradication operations in 1985, destroying an estimated three-quarters of the summer harvest. The eradication teams are made up of JCF officers and laborers hired by the police. Helicopter mobility improves the field workers' productivity dramatically and is the key to a successful manual eradication campaign. US officials in Kingston have called for more US support of the JDF Air Wing in the form of UH-1N helicopters and spare parts.

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The connection between drugs and firearms is contributing to Jamaica's already endemic political violence. Many of the fatal shootings in Jamaica result from clashes among Kingston's tough street gangs (often identified with rival political parties), and greater access to high-powered weapons by politically motivated gunmen is likely to heighten the level of violence still further. Even more ominous is an apparent shift in loyalty by some of the gangs from the political parties to drug trafficking groups.

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Prospects for Narcotics Control in Jamaica

Changes in Jamaica's drug industry have affected public perceptions and official policies toward narcotics control. In the past, most Jamaicans considered marijuana production and trafficking as problems mainly for foreigners. Many Jamaicans—if they thought about drug operations at all—believed that marijuana was a net economic benefit to Jamaica. The lax public attitude toward drug enforcement was reflected in a set of Jamaican Government policies aimed chiefly at foreign smugglers. Jamaican authorities avoided the political costs of cracking down on Jamaican citizens because, by the time the marijuana had been processed and loaded, most of the Jamaicans involved had already been paid. Prime Minister Seaga argued until recently that he could not afford to

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Jamaican drug traffickers so far have not retaliated against the island's security forces in spite of increasingly effective enforcement operations, but both Jamaican and US personnel have been threatened. Continued progress in the marijuana eradication program and heightened interdiction efforts could soon provoke a violent response from growers and traffickers who may soon be competing for dwindling supplies of marijuana to fill their orders.

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attack the marijuana production of small-scale farmers because many were JLP supporters. [REDACTED]

rural poverty in Jamaica as a constraint on aggressive drug enforcement. [REDACTED]

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Public attitudes now appear to be shifting in Jamaica in favor of stricter drug enforcement. Rising cocaine abuse, police corruption, the connection between drug trafficking and the import of illegal weapons, and threats to the tourist industry have heightened public concern. In late February 1985, both of Jamaica's major newspapers carried editorials condemning drug trafficking. Both editorials stressed the strong US position on the issue and warned that continued Jamaican lenience in drug enforcement risked grave economic consequences for the nation. The more significant of the editorials was by Dr. Carl Stone, Jamaica's leading political columnist. Stone claimed that he had once taken a relaxed view of marijuana and believed it was a net benefit to Jamaica, but that he had changed his mind. In June, a senior official in Jamaica's Ministry of Health told a US official in Kingston that the level of public tolerance for drug production and trafficking was decreasing rapidly. Cocaine was appearing in Jamaican high schools, the official added, and it had been linked to a rise in crime, which the official believed was committed to finance drug habits. [REDACTED]

Seaga's Political Calculation. Until recently, Jamaica's Prime Minister had been unwilling to push drug control programs aggressively, but since late 1984 he has taken several steps that indicate a change in attitude. Before 1985, Jamaican drug enforcement programs consisted largely of an ineffective attempt to dynamite illegal airfields and a half-hearted campaign to tax drug traffickers' illegal incomes. Under US pressure to improve Jamaican drug enforcement, Seaga responded by asking for resources—such as sophisticated radar systems and aircraft—that he probably knew Washington would not provide. [REDACTED]

The apparent change in Seaga's political calculation was signaled in September 1984, in a speech reviewing the social and economic damage inflicted on Jamaica by drug production and trafficking. Seaga pointed out that the illicit trade threatened Jamaica's relations with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. He acknowledged for the first time publicly that increasing consolidation of the island's drug industry had eroded the "small farmer" argument he had often used in the past, when he portrayed

Seaga's change of position could be an attempt to mollify US officials critical of Jamaican performance on drug control, but we consider it more likely a response to the perceptible shift in public attitudes and a growing realization that drug production and trafficking in Jamaica have changed from a "mom and pop" operation to a well-organized criminal enterprise. In view of Jamaica's continuing economic constraints, it is also likely that Seaga now takes seriously US threats to cut back economic aid or take other measures—such as seizing Air Jamaica aircraft—that would damage Jamaican interests. [REDACTED]

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We expect Seaga to remain cautious in exploring how far he can push an expanded drug control program in Jamaica and to move ahead slowly until resistance develops. In a late March conversation with US officials, Seaga said that, in spite of Cabinet opposition, he intended to go ahead with an investigation of aerial spraying, emphasizing that the inquiry must be made without publicity because the topic was extremely sensitive in Jamaica. Although Senator Oswald Harding, chairman of the island's National Council on Drug Abuse, stated in March that Jamaica would not use paraquat to eradicate marijuana, he did not rule out other methods of chemical eradication. Manual eradication operations in the first half of 1985 are well ahead of the pace set in 1984, and the expected political backlash has not occurred. [REDACTED]

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Signs of Progress in Drug Control. Since Seaga's September 1984 speech, the Jamaican Government has made substantial progress in drug control, particularly in marijuana eradication. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] By late May, security forces had destroyed more than 600 hectares of marijuana, exceeding the total of about 440 hectares reported for 1984. [REDACTED]

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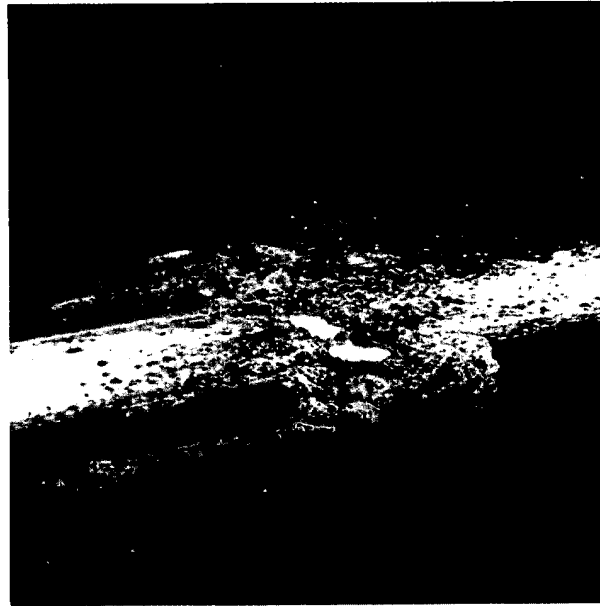
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This rural coastline road (left) was used as an airstrip by marijuana smugglers before JDF troops using engineer equipment



cut trenches across it at several points. The JDF also has used dynamite (right) to damage clandestine airfields.

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while targeting others for future destruction. Although traffickers were able to repair a few of these damaged strips within a few days, destruction of heavily used clandestine fields forced smuggling pilots to use unfamiliar airstrips for their operations, resulting in an unusually high number of airplane crashes during April, May, and June.

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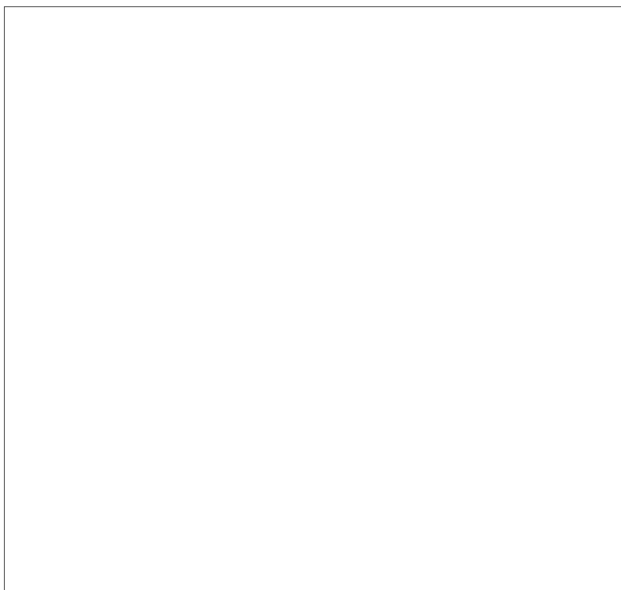
The JDF is now participating in joint counternarcotics operations with the police force, and a JDF/JCF task force under military command has been formed to better coordinate joint operations. The island's military forces appear to be far less affected by the corruption that impairs JCF performance and are more disciplined than the heavily politicized police force. The JDF also is the only government agency in Jamaica with access to helicopters, and it is more mobile than the police. A joint JDF/JCF narcotics operation in mid-May resulted in the seizure of about 320 kilograms of cocaine and the arrest of five brothers from a prominent Jamaican family with political connections. These arrests probably could not have occurred without the participation of the Defense Forces.

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This year Seaga has turned increasingly to Jamaica's military forces to strengthen the island's counternarcotics operations. In late February, he shifted responsibility for security at Jamaica's four major domestic airfields from the Civil Aviation Department to the JDF in an attempt to better control smuggling. In addition, JDF engineer units were ordered to use heavy equipment to destroy clandestine airstrips used by traffickers. In April, the JDF identified some 40 illegal airfields as major outlets for marijuana traffickers, and demolished 29 by the middle of June,

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Despite considerable strides in drug enforcement, the present downturn in production and trafficking may be only temporary. Major drug dealers are deeply entrenched in Jamaica and, unlike small-scale producers, have the financial resources to curtail their activities for a while in anticipation of an eventual return to lax enforcement efforts.

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leading drug traffickers may have restrained their operations this spring and summer while waiting to see if current drug enforcement pressure can be maintained:

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Jamaica's military resources are already very limited, and expending them on drug enforcement requires reductions in other areas. One of the JDF's few helicopters was badly damaged in a drug raid in May and, according to US officials in Kingston, will require about \$1 million to repair. The JDF Coast Guard, which has played an important role in the island's drug enforcement campaign, is also responsible for coastal security, search-and-rescue operations, and fisheries regulation but has only four aging patrol boats with which to carry out these varied missions.

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Trafficker Reactions and Future Prospects. Increasingly effective drug suppression programs in Jamaica have forced marijuana growers and traders to reduce their operations and to develop countermeasures to protect their lucrative business. The military takeover of airport security in February and the airstrip demolition program between April and June restricted air smugglers' options.

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The marijuana eradication campaign probably discouraged many farmers from planting a 1985 summer crop.

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US marijuana buyers are becoming reluctant to deal in the Jamaican market because of increasing risks.

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Improvement in Jamaican drug enforcement since last year has taxed Kingston's limited resources and will require sustained external aid to maintain the pace set since September 1984. US Embassy officials have warned repeatedly that funds for the eradication

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program are running low, and more aid has been requested. For example, by late September the JDF was down to only one operational helicopter, and US officials in Kingston urgently requested more helicopters and spare parts to deal with the upcoming fall harvest. Further, the JDF Coast Guard lacks the spare parts and fuel to keep its patrol boats operating at full capacity, and it is not prepared to counter the surge in maritime drug trafficking expected as air routes are squeezed. [redacted]

[redacted] marijuana stocks were up as a result of a bumper crop last year. If so, these stocks will be sharply reduced because of the small spring crop, and a push by the traffickers to reestablish fields and trafficking routes could occur late this summer and fall. [redacted]

At present Jamaica's drug traffickers probably feel little threatened by a Seaga government beleaguered with debt, unemployment, and civil strife. They are vulnerable, however, and there are a number of measures Kingston could take to achieve the Prime Minister's stated goals to eliminate large-scale marijuana cultivation on the island and to discourage the traffickers from becoming more firmly established in Jamaica. Despite the inefficiencies of manual marijuana eradication, compared with the aerial spraying technique, manual eradication did cut back on the spring 1985 crop and discouraged many of the island's farmers from participating in the harvest. [redacted]

[redacted] If the US-assisted program is continued, and particularly if more helicopter mobility is provided to boost eradication workers' productivity, manual eradication will remain a substantial disincentive to large-scale marijuana cultivation. [redacted]

The Jamaican Government could introduce legislation to strengthen its drug laws and could prosecute a prominent trafficker to lend further credibility to Seaga's pronouncements about a crackdown. Jamaican prosecutors still lack many of the powerful tools available to their US counterparts to attack complex criminal organizations, but there are signs Jamaica is beginning to liberalize its court system to better deal with drug traffickers. According to US Embassy reporting, tape recordings of incriminating evidence recently were accepted for the first time by a Jamaican court in a major drug case. Jamaican judicial

officers could request additional training from US and other enforcement agencies in areas in which Jamaican law enforcement is weak, such as undercover techniques. Police experts of other Commonwealth nations whose legal systems resemble Jamaica's could help the island's prosecutors develop a stronger legal arsenal. Canadian authorities in particular could be helpful, and, since Canada is a major market for Jamaican drugs, the Canadians have an incentive to assist Jamaican drug enforcement officials. Most important, the nagging problem of high-level corruption must be faced squarely. [redacted]

The Government of Jamaica could strengthen its drug enforcement program significantly by developing procedures to seize traffickers' assets. Asset seizure has proved a useful enforcement technique in the United States and elsewhere because it attacks the economic benefits of drug trafficking. [redacted]

[redacted] Although US officials in Kingston anticipate delays in moving the proposal through the Jamaican bureaucracy, Jamaican security officers have expressed strong interest in the technique and have sought US help in adapting it to the Jamaican legal system. The cooperation of the US Department of Justice would almost certainly be required because many leading Jamaican drug traders have substantial economic assets located in the United States. [redacted]

For the long term, the Jamaican Government can begin to marshal opposition to drugs through public education, thus encouraging public support for future law enforcement initiatives. Because Jamaicans are far more sensitive to cocaine abuse than they are to their familiar marijuana, a program emphasizing cocaine is likely to be most effective. Opposition to drugs in Jamaica has lacked focus while prodrug forces have been better organized. Recent seizures by the US Customs Service of Air Jamaica aircraft and

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finer against the airline for carrying drugs could threaten the tourism sector of the economy, [redacted]

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[redacted] Prime Minister Seaga could use such incidents to gain further support for his antinarcotics measures. In addition, a grant in April of \$380,000 from the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control may also help shape the antidrug effort by lending structure to the drug abuse education program. [redacted]

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